

## Saturday 6th June



*But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or turn back from following you;  
for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge.  
Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God.  
Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried.  
Thus may the LORD do to me, and worse, if anything but death parts you and me."  
[Ruth 1: 16–17]*

The month of June was meant to be Bible month, this year looking at the book of Ruth – and maybe some of you are still going ahead, studying this on your own or with friends online. I thought I'd pick up on this theme for this month's prayers, looking particularly at the many insights Ruth's story gives us into the way we treat others.

The first chapter of the book of Ruth speaks mainly of Naomi.

Naomi had a loving husband and two sons; by Jewish tradition she was classed as having what she needed. When famine hits Bethlehem, the family travel to Moab so that they may survive. In Moab her two sons both marry Moabite women – Orpah and Ruth. After several years everything in Naomi's life is turned upside down – her husband Elimelech, and her two sons, tragically die. She goes from having everything she needed to having nothing – no husband and no sons to protect her – and she is left with two foreign daughters-in-law to care for.

In the moment of her worst nightmare, Naomi decides to go home. Ruth and Orpah beg to go with her, but Naomi pleads with them to go back to their families; she has no means to help them. Eventually Orpah turns back, but Ruth remains with Naomi. The passage above is Ruth's declaration to Naomi: she will stay with her always, nothing will separate them.

Are there people in your life you would do this for? Do you understand Ruth's commitment to Naomi? It is this commitment that God calls us to have for our neighbours; it's not easy, and it is certainly costly.

*God of costly love  
You show us how we should love each other;  
Nothing can separate us from your love.  
You ask us to love others this same way –  
Not just our family and friends,  
But the strangers amongst us.  
Give us the strength and courage to love others  
In the way that you love us.  
Amen.*